

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 72 to 90 remain in the current application. Claims 72 to 90 are new while Claims 32 to 71 have been cancelled.

Claims 32 to 40, 43 and 47 to 59 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent No. 6,299,216 to Thompson ("Thompson") in view of US Patent No. 4,792,162 to Medvick ("Medvick"). New independent claim 72 is directed at the subject matter of:

A substantially flat two-part exhaust flange comprising:

a first substantially flat part having a pipe-attachment means; and

a second annular sealing part fitting said first part, the second part having a sealing surface opposite said pipe-attachment means, the sealing surface defining a protrusion or a cavity;

wherein the first part of the second part or both are manufactured of sintered powdered metal.

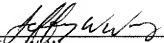
Similar subject matter has been added to independent claim 88.

Applicant respectfully submits neither Thompson, nor Medvick, when read separately or together, disclose, suggest, teach, anticipate or obviate the claimed subject matter. Although Thompson does disclose an exhaust flange having a first part and a second part, the second part is typically, an annular main seal 9, a sacrificial "O" ring seal 15 or an annular ring 18 such that in Thompson, the second part is simply a means for sealing between two ends of pipe lengths 3a and 3b. The second part in Applicant's invention is now more clearly defined in new claim 72. The second part is an annular sealing part which fits the first part has includes a sealing surface defining a protrusion or a cavity. The second part of Applicant's invention is an actual part of the flange, as shown, in one embodiment, in Figures 45 and 46 whereby the second part 512 mates with the first part 500. Furthermore, Applicant respectfully submits that Medvick is also silent regarding this claimed subject matter. Retraction of Examiner's rejection of Claims 32 to 40, 43 and 47 to 59 is respectfully requested.

Applicant respectfully believes that the application is now in a position for a Notice of Allowance which Applicant respectfully requests.

Yours truly,
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